

## SURE OF RELIEF IN WICKS BILL

Whitman, Mitchel and Perkins Confer on Food Situation

1,000,000 CIRCULARS TO BE DISTRIBUTED

Every Housewife in City To Be Told How to Reduce Table Costs

Governor Whitman, Mayor Mitchel and George W. Perkins, chairman of the executive committee of Mayor Mitchel's Food Supply Committee, held a conference yesterday afternoon in the Hotel St. Regis to discuss the food situation.

Mr. Perkins said after the conference that they had agreed to appeal to the people of the state to back the Wicks bill, creating a State Department of Feeds and Markets, now pending before the Legislature.

Governor Whitman said that he was looking forward to permanent relief and improvement in food conditions in the pending food and market bill, which would bring about a systematic supervision. He said he believed the Wicks committee report contained an accurate account of conditions, and hoped the measure would be enacted.

Mr. Perkins said that 1,000,000 circulars, telling how to substitute rice for

more expensive food, notably potatoes, would be in every home in New York City to-morrow night. The circulars will be distributed through the school children. He took sharp issue with Joseph Hartigan, Commissioner of Weights and Measures, who asserts that he can purchase all the potatoes he wants for \$2.25 a bushel.

Perkins Contradicts Hartigan  
"I wish you would say that if Mr. Hartigan would come down to earth and do less talking on matters of which he knows nothing he could make himself a little more helpful," said Mr. Perkins. "It is all nonsense to say that potatoes can be bought for \$2.25 a bushel, delivered in New York City. Our potato crop last year was only 65 per cent of normal, and we exported 2,700,000 bushels, a million bushels more than we exported the year before. Mr. Hartigan simply cannot make good on what he says. We have been shipping enormous food supplies abroad at big prices, and in consequence we are short on certain articles."

Mr. Perkins said he wanted to inquire, however, what the Governor had said in regard to the exaggeration of food conditions. While there was no question but that there was a scarcity of certain food and a consequent rise in price, he pointed out that many people were not using sensible substitutes, rice in particular.

"We have been studying the food situation for the last three years," said Mr. Perkins, "and here in the city we have ourselves largely to blame for the present situation. Just fancy the Mayor of the city yesterday receiving half a dozen telegrams from various cities inclosing offers of food, and yet there was not one single department to which the Mayor could send these telegrams. The necessity for a market department certainly never was more pronounced."

Hartigan Gives Figures  
Commissioner Hartigan yesterday afternoon produced a long list of figures showing comparative prices of meats, fish and vegetables for this and former years. The figures compiled by experts in his office indicated that fish and meat had gone up from 10 to 25 per cent, on the average, since the beginning of the war, while potatoes had shot up from 100 to 700 per cent since a year ago.

"In spite of this enormous boosting in prices," said Commissioner Hartigan, "the fact remains that the receipts of foods of all sorts in New York City have increased during the last three years in a greater proportion than the population. Food receipts in New York City are practically normal at present."

There was a slight drop in onions during the day. Bags of 100 pounds were quoted at \$11 to \$12.50 wholesale. The top price last week was \$15. Bermuda onions were reported lower than domestic, being quoted at \$3.50 a crate weighing 45 pounds.

Mr. Hartigan said that one dealer had reported that wholesalers could sell onions for \$5 a 100-pound bag wholesale and make money.

Price of Potatoes

White potatoes were \$10 to \$11.50 for 180 pounds wholesale yesterday. A year ago the same quantity sold wholesale for \$3.30 to \$4. Potatoes sold retail a year ago for 1 to 4 cents a pound. Yesterday the price was 7 to 8 cents. A basket of sweet potatoes, weighing eighty-one pounds, sold yesterday wholesale for \$1 to \$2. A year ago the price was 75 cents to \$1. The retail price yesterday was 6 cents a

pound; a year ago it was 2 to 3 cents.

The wholesale prices of meats and fish yesterday, compared with the prices on February 24, 1914, four months before the war, gathered by Commissioner Hartigan's staff, are as follows:

	1917.	1914.
Per pound.		
Straight beef	15 1/2	14 1/2
Prime beef	16 1/2	15 1/2
Chuck	12 1/2	11 1/2
Lamb	24 1/2	22 1/2
City lamb	25 1/2	23 1/2
Western mutton	24 1/2	22 1/2
City mutton	25 1/2	23 1/2
Mutton	26 1/2	24 1/2

Several hundred nurses employed by the Department of Health have completed a two-day survey of food conditions among the poor in the boroughs of New York. They will report their findings to Health Commissioner Emerson, who will deliver the report to Mayor Mitchel, at whose request the investigation was made.

At the conference held in connection with the High Cost of Living Exhibit resolutions were adopted yesterday requesting the city government to buy large quantities of food and distribute it at cost to the poor, and urging the state Legislature and Congress that they take measures to break up any existing land monopoly by taxation.

The Women's Anti-High Price League yesterday announced at its headquarters, 175 East Broadway, that a mass meeting, at which 3,000,000 workers of New York were to be represented, would be held in Public School 62, Hester and Essex Streets, this afternoon to discuss the food situation.

## WHITMAN FAVORS BILL TO INCREASE LIQUOR TAX

Still for Prohibition, But Thinks It Will Come Through Local Option

Governor Whitman declared yesterday that he was strongly in favor of the amendments to the liquor tax law introduced in the Legislature on Friday, provided the bill called for a reduction in the number of saloons in the state and an increase in revenue.

"I am not yet familiar with the terms of this bill," said the Governor, "but I understand if it becomes a law it will decrease the number of saloons and increase the revenue to the state from the liquor traffic. If that is true, I am heartily in favor of the bill."

The Governor was asked if he was still for prohibition.

"Yes, I am," he replied. "I am on record on that subject, and I stand by what I have said. But I am in favor of prohibition by local option, and I believe we are going to get it."

## BRASH ACTION POSSIBLE IF KINGS IMPEDE PROGRESS

People of England Know How to Cut Off Heads, Says Parliament Member

Francis Neilson, a Member of Parliament for six years, told the League for Political Education yesterday at Carnegie Hall that the end of the war would bring a United States of Europe without tariff barriers.

"I don't think royal impediments will stand in the way of progress when the people make up their minds," he declared. "We have dealt with them before in England. We have cut off their heads."

The speaker said that he stood for peace without victory.

## SWANN SEES PLOT BY PRODUCE MEN

Ascribes High Food Prices to Combination Made for Profits

CARS OF POTATOES ON SIDINGS HERE

Collusion of Farmers and Roads Also Alleged by Prosecutor

District Attorney Swann announced last night that his investigation into vegetable prices had convinced him that prices of potatoes, cabbages and onions were absurdly out of proportion to the actual shortage, and that the blame rested on the farmers and commission men, who were holding produce back and thus creating an artificial famine.

"I have the word of one of these commission men that this is just what they have been doing," said the District Attorney.

"In my opinion, these fellows have been violating the state anti-trust act. It isn't necessary to show conspiracy. The arrangement in the present situation is with the railroads, and they do not necessarily have guilty knowledge."

To back up his assertions about the quantities of potatoes, cabbages and onions held in freight cars in Manhattan, Mr. Swann quoted the figures obtained yesterday by Assistant District Attorney Markewich and Eder from the books of Chief Clerk Martin, in the Thirty-third Street yards of the New York Central. They were given out by Mr. Markewich as follows:

On February 21 there were fifty-five cars of potatoes in the yards, five cars of turnips, no onions, carrots, beets or celery or cabbage. Unloadings for that day included ten cars of potatoes and one car of turnips. On this day, however, nineteen cars were put on the "working" tracks ready to be unloaded.

On February 22 there were sixty-two cars of potatoes in the yard, three cars of turnips and one of cabbage. Unloadings were five cars of potatoes and four cars of turnips. On the "working" tracks there were thirty-one cars of potatoes.

On February 23 there were seventy-four cars of potatoes, five of turnips and one of cabbage. Unloadings up to noon were one carload of turnips and one of cabbage. Received up to noon, eleven cars of potatoes and four cars of turnips. On the "working" tracks there were thirty-one cars of potatoes.

"If the same ratio of accumulation prevails in the terminals of the other trunk roads there can be no doubt that the price boost of the last ten days is all out of proportion to the government reports of shortage," said Mr. Markewich.

"The crop report of January showed that on January 1, 1917, the potato crop was 44 per cent smaller than it was a year ago. The retail price is 400 per

cent higher than it was a year ago—and there is no famine, according to the freight yard receipts."

Mr. Markewich will investigate the yard reports of the Pennsylvania and the Erie railroads to-morrow.

Abraham Rosenbloom, the "onion king" of Brooklyn, was questioned yesterday by Mr. Markewich. He said the whole trouble was due to a shortage of more than 1,000,000 bushels of onions over last year.

"At present there are less than 500 carloads of onions in storage and elsewhere in the country," Rosenbloom declared. "While the normal demand from now until the middle of April, when the Texas crop will begin to come in, would be 3,000 cars, based on last year's figures."

"How are vegetable prices fixed?" asked Mr. Markewich.

"By the farmers themselves," replied Rosenbloom. "The law of demand and supply governs it, though. If a farmer sees a dealer is willing to pay the price he asks he immediately jumps the price on the dealer's second visit. A farmer

update told me he had several tons of cabbage, and he declared he wouldn't sell them until he could get \$200 a ton. I offered him \$150. We are offered potatoes now below the market prices, but buying has nearly stopped."

"Why the enormous price for potatoes, then?" asked Mr. Markewich.

"If the people are willing to pay a big price dealers would be foolish not to take it," replied Rosenbloom.

Brownsville Mothers Protest After Food Parade Is Barred

"We only wanted to walk in the streets to show we couldn't get the food for the children. Why wouldn't they let us march?"

It was a tired and a perplexed crowd of women who got back to Brownsville yesterday afternoon, after spending the morning in a vain attempt to parade to Union Square. They crowded into Mrs. Margaret Sanger's birth control clinic,

at 26 Amboy Street, to hold a meeting of protest.

"It was the first time the mothers ever wanted to parade," said Mrs. Minnie Mendelson, the mother of twelve. "They let the police parade and the soldiers and the preparedness men. Why wouldn't they let the mothers? We weren't going to hurt anybody."

Resolutions of protest were passed, in which the women asserted their right to food and their desire to have Mrs. Sanger released from jail at once, and the men who raised the price of onions put in her place. Then they settled down to a discussion of the food problem.

"It isn't the onions alone," said Mrs. Mendelson. "All the time the price of food is going up. Yesterday my husband said: 'Why don't you have some cabbage for dinner?'"

"Well, I have nine in family, and I need five pounds of cabbage, but I know I cannot afford it, so I pick up a little head. Two and a half pounds, the man says, and it is 35 cents. I must

have meat and potatoes for a soup, and that makes nearly \$2.50 just for dinner. Where is my bread and butter and tea, and where is my bread for breakfast?"

"I have seven in family," broke in a sad-eyed, hatless little woman, with a child tugging at her skirts, "and my husband makes \$12 a week. Every day I must have three bottles of milk. I get it for 9 cents at the milk station, because there I take the baby to be weighed. Pretty soon the baby will be grown too big, and then I must buy milk at the grocer's for 15 cents. Where is soup and meat and bread for the big children? They get feeble-minded and sit in the schools weak."

"I give the children soup of the cow meal," began another, and was interrupted by a chorus of disapproval.

"Yes, I know, it spoils the stomach," she said, "but it is good for the day."

The meeting broke up with sobs when Mrs. Goldberg's story was told. Mrs. Goldberg has eight children living in a cellar at 49 Herli Street, and her husband cannot do anything but pick rags.



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